

Once again I would like to thank all of you for coming out tonight for such a great cause. My story about how cancer has affected my life may not be very different from yours. I relay in honor of my grandmother and a friend, and in memory of someone who played an important role in my life, Chuck Schrock. Mr. Schrock was a man you could count on for anything. He was a son, a brother, an uncle, a father, a coach, a mentor, a neighbor, a friend, and best of all a survivor. Besides his two girls and his son, he had many kids, including my sisters and myself, and his teams he coached. But about 13 years ago he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, and fought with everything he had, and survived. However, I only knew him during his second battle with cancer.

When I first meet Chuck after moving into our neighborhood, he left a lasting impression. Throughout the 8 years of knowing Chuck, a friendship grew between us that can never be forgotten. Not just for me, but for my sisters as well, he showed constant support in my life, and would always be there for me with a big bear hug, cheering me on with my sports, and always there for a good laugh.

He was diagnosed January 2008 with Radiation Induced Sarcoma Cancer. After his diagnosis his personality changed and you could tell he was getting sick. After numerous treatments his body began to fall apart. But his family and my family stayed by his side and supported him during his fight.

A letter from Mrs. Schrock stated that three words come to mind when she thought about the caregiver position she had, and I cannot agree more with her. These three words are terrifying, lonely, and most rewarding life experience ever. Terrifying in the fact that we spent a lot of the time being afraid. Mrs. Schrock was afraid she might let someone down (her husband, their children, and his family). The weight of this

responsibility is indescribable. And yet, she would NOT have wanted anyone else to have this role. She felt lucky. Lucky to have the privilege of taking care of him.

Lonely, because you are the soul person in charge, you make all of the decisions and you do it all by yourself. You are the head cheerleader even when you want to crawl into bed and cover your head with a blanket. You are the decision maker, even when you have no idea what protocol for treatment is best. You are the one who keeps everything running smoothly and cheering up everyone around you. You are alone even when you have a house full of well meaning friends and family. You are frightened but you cannot tell anyone because you promised yourself you would always believe in a cure. You are sad but you cannot let anyone see you cry because this just makes them feel bad and you don't want people to feel bad for you. You cannot tell your spouse that you cannot bear the thought of living without them because then you are giving a voice to this disease that you vowed would not win.

And rewarding because the role of caregiver gave Mrs. Schrock a sense of empowerment over a disease for which she had no control. She may not have known how to beat cancer but she knew how to help Chuck fight. She knew it took courage and optimism and a belief that one day we would win this war. She also knew that she wouldn't have wanted to trade places with anyone during those 10 weeks or during that year in 1998. With everything that Mr. Schrock endured, the least she could do was be by his side and take care of him and all decisions affecting our lives so he could focus on taking care of himself.

Now, I know my caregiver position was not as involved as Mrs. Schrock's was but I still consider myself a caregiver. When I was home I would be at the Schrock

household helping with anything I could, making cookies, sharing some good laughs, and making him get well cards. When I was at college, I would send him weekly cards and pictures of what I've been doing, to comfort not just him but myself with knowing we are staying in touch, and even though I was a couple hours away I was still there with him.

After 10 weeks with his battle with cancer for the second time, he passed away April 22nd 2008. When I got that phone call from my mom saying he had died, my world stopped, and nothing else seemed to matter. It took me an hour and a half, instead of the typical two hours, to get home to be with family. He may have lost this final battle but his legacy lives on. His children and his friends and his family continue to be a voice for those whose earthly voice has been silenced. This caregiver will never give up the fight. Some day, we will win and I want the pain and suffering of my neighbor to have made a difference. Tonight I Relay in loving memory of Chuck Schrock, and would like to share a poem with you, that I have found called Tonight I Light this Candle.

I miss being able to see you.

I miss talking to you every day,

But up to God's kingdom in heaven

You have finally found your way.

Tonight I light this candle for you,

To let you know I still care,

But that's not the end of it.

I have a message I want to share

In just a few short hours,

This candle may burn out,
But the passion you have put inside me,
Will always be what I'm about.
Tomorrow this candle that I have lit,
It may be taken and it may be gone,
But the admiration that I have for you,
That will continue to rage on.
You are still with me,
In every breath that I take,
And you are still with me,
In every decision that I make.
You have given me precious memories,
And those memories are here to stay.
They are treasures for my soul,
That can never be taken away.
So tonight I light this candle,
But this candle is only a small part,
Of the deep love for you,
That will always be in my heart.